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PTQ1270

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ACTION WHA-00  
RELEASED IN PART  
B1, 1.4(D)

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CEA-01	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00
	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
	EXIM-01	E-00	FAAE-00	VC-00	FRB-00	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	ITC-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01
	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00
	IRM-00	SSO-00	STR-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/009W	

-----F493C0 091924Z /38

P 091841Z OCT 02  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8056  
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL  
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 CARACAS 003163

NSC FOR LLORENS  
USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/09/2012  
TAGS: PGOV, ECON, VE  
SUBJECT: FEDECAMARAS CONFERENCE - VENEZUELA'S BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY CONFRONTS CHAVEZ

CLASSIFIED BY: AMBASSADOR CHARLES S. SHAPIRO: REASON: 1.5(B)(D).

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SUMMARY

1. (C) ON OCTOBER 4-5, FEDECAMARAS, THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR VENEZUELA,S BUSINESS COMMUNITY, HELD ITS ANNUAL CONVENTION IN BARQUISIMETO. FEDECAMARAS REAFFIRMED ITS SUPPORT FOR THE OCTOBER 10 ANTI-CHAVEZ MARCH IN CARACAS AND FOR A SUBSEQUENT GENERAL STRIKE, WHILE REJECTING A MILITARY COUP AS A SOLUTION. MEMBERS RALLIED AROUND THE ORGANIZATION,S PRESIDENT, CARLOS FERNANDEZ, IN THE FACE OF ATTACKS ON HIM BY THE GOV. THE CTV, VENEZUELA,S MAIN LABOR CONFEDERATION, WAS PRESENT AT THE MEETING IN A SHOW OF SOLIDARITY IN THE ANTI-CHAVEZ CAUSE. NO GOV OFFICIAL ATTENDED THE CONFERENCE.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS  
DATE/CASE ID: 31 AUG 2004 200400110

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END

SUMMARY.

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STAYING IN THE STRUGGLE  
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2. (U) THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF CHAMBERS OF INDUSTRY AND  
COMMERCE (FEDECAMARAS), THE UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION UNITING  
VENEZUELA,S SECTORAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY ORGANIZATIONS, HELD  
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ITS ANNUAL MEETING IN BARQUISIMETO ON OCTOBER 4-5.  
FEDECAMARAS PRESIDENT CARLOS FERNANDEZ MADE CLEAR IN HIS  
KEYNOTE SPEECH, SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED AS A FORMAL POLICY  
STATEMENT CALLED THE &DECLARATION OF BARQUISIMETO,8 THAT  
THE BUSINESS SECTOR WOULD REMAIN IN THE FOREFRONT OF  
OPPOSITION TO THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED  
AS &AUTHORITARIAN... WITH MESSIANIC ACCENTS...8 AND  
DEDICATED TO &SATANIZING THE OPPOSITION.8 HE DECRIED ITS  
&CLASS HATRED,8 &CULTURAL REGIMENTATION,8 AND  
&IDEOLOGICAL FOREIGN POLICY.8

3. (C) FERNANDEZ AND OTHER SPEAKERS AT THE CONVENTION  
REITERATED SUPPORT FOR THE OCTOBER 10 ANTI-CHAVEZ MARCH IN  
CARACAS AND FOR THE PROPOSED GENERAL STRIKE TO TAKE PLACE  
LATER. FEDECAMARAS HAS NAMED A "STRATEGIC COMMITTEES WHICH  
MET DURING THE BARQUISIMETO CONFERENCE, AND WHICH, TOGETHER  
WITH THE CTV LABOR FEDERATION, WILL PROPOSE A DATE ) BY MOST  
ACCOUNTS SOME TIME DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF NOVEMBER.

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A COUP NOT THE ANSWER

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4. (U) IN HIS SPEECH, FERNANDEZ REJECTED A MILITARY SOLUTION TO VENEZUELA,S CRISIS. HE STATED: &MILITARY INTERVENTION WOULD BE DANGEROUS AND PREJUDICIAL BECAUSE IT WOULD ANNUL, EVEN IF TEMPORARILY, THE INTRINSICALLY CIVIL MECHANISMS OF THE DEMOCRATIC GAME AND WOULD CREATE A DE FACTO PRECEDENT WHICH WOULD NOT STOP BEING RAISED AS A THREAT... A CLEARLY COUP-ORIENTED (&GOLPISTA8) PROJECT WOULD BE VERY DAMAGING.8 HE DID, HOWEVER, SUGGEST THAT THE DOOR NOT BE CLOSED TO &ANY SECTOR IN PARTICULAR8 IN NATIONAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS, AND &CERTAIN FUNCTIONS RELATED TO THE STATE, NATION, AND SOCIETY WHICH BELONG TO THE ARMED FORCES, ARE EVIDENTLY OF A CLEARLY POLITICAL NATURE.8

STAND BY YOUR MAN

5. (U) THE MOST ROUSING MOMENTS OF THE CONVENTION CAME WHEN A FORMER FEDECAMARAS PRESIDENT DENOUNCED IN RINGING TERMS GOV EFFORTS TO DIVIDE THE MEMBERSHIP FROM CURRENT PRESIDENT FERNANDEZ. HE REFERRED TO RECENT REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT RANGEL THAT HE HAD NO PROBLEMS WITH FEDECAMARAS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN GENERAL, BUT WITH FERNANDEZ WHO WAS

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	DODE-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	PERC-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00
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BECOMING &CARMONA TWO.8 (FERNANDEZ,S PREDECESSOR PEDRO  
CARMONA HAD BRIEFLY CLAIMED THE ROLE OF TRANSITIONAL  
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PRESIDENT OF VENEZUELA DURING THE EVENTS OF APRIL 11.) THE  
AUDIENCE OF NORMALLY BUSINESSMEN ROSE TO THEIR FEET WITH  
CRIES OF &NOT ONE STEP BACKWARD!8 AND &STRIKE, STRIKE!8  
THE WHITE HAIRE, IMPECCABLY DRESSED FERNANDEZ ACKNOWLEDGED  
THE ROAR OF THE CROWD WITH A FIST RAISED IN DETERMINATION.

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TRADE MINISTER ) &WHY DIDN,T YOU CALL?8  
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6. (U) ALTHOUGH MINISTER OF PRODUCTION AND COMMERCE RAMON  
ROSALES APPEARED ON THE CONVENTION,S PROGRAM, NEITHER HE NOR  
ANY OTHER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOV ACTUALLY CAME. FOREIGN  
MINISTER ROY CHADERTON WAS IN BARQUISIMETO AT ONE POINT  
DURING THE CONFERENCE FOR ANOTHER ACTIVITY BUT ALSO STAYED  
AWAY. ROSALES, WHO INSTEAD PARTICIPATED IN THE OPENING OF  
THE CARACAS AUTO SHOW, TOLD CARACAS DAILY &EL NACIONAL8  
THAT HE HAD RECEIVED A &FORMAL, BUREAUCRATIC8 WRITTEN  
INVITATION FROM FEDECAMARAS A MONTH EARLIER, BUT THERE HAD  
BEEN NO SUBSEQUENT EFFORT TO CALL HIM, AS A &SPECIAL  
INVITEE,8 TO URGE HIM TO ATTEND, SO HE DECLINED. (COMMENT:  
ALTHOUGH ROSALES COMMANDS SOME AFFECTION WITHIN CERTAIN  
BUSINESS CIRCLES BECAUSE OF HIS TENACIOUS DEVOTION TO  
INDUSTRIAL PROTECTION, GIVEN THE CONVENTION,S ANTI-CHAVEZ  
PEP RALLY AMBIENCE, HE PROBABLY MADE THE RIGHT CALL IN  
STAYING AWAY. END COMMENT.)

7. (U) IF THE GOV STAYED AWAY, PRO-CHAVEZ DEMONSTRATORS  
MADE THEIR PRESENCE FELT. A GROUP, TOGETHER WITH A BAND,  
APPEARED AT THE GATE TO THE BARQUISIMETO HILTON, THE  
CONVENTION SITE, TO CHANT PRO-CHAVEZ SLOGANS. THEY DAUBED  
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NEARBY WALLS WITH THE WORDS &FEDECAMARAS GOLPISTAS  
(COUPSTERS)8 AND LEFT AFTER SEVERAL HOURS. FROM THEIR  
POSITION WELL OUTSIDE OF THE HOTEL, AT THE ENTRANCE TO ITS

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LARGE PARKING LOT, THE DEMONSTRATORS CAUSED NO INTERFERENCE IN FEDECAMARAS, ACTIVITIES. BARQUISIMETO POLICE PROVIDED ADEQUATE (AND NOT OVERBEARING) SECURITY.

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A LABOR PRESENCE  
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8. (U) THE WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN FEDECAMARAS AND THE CTV LABOR CONFEDERATION WHICH THE ANTI-CHAVEZ CAUSE HAS INSPIRED CONTINUED AT BARQUISEMETO. PABLO CASTRO, CTV EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, GAVE A SPEECH ON BEHALF OF CTV PRESIDENT CARLOS ORTEGA, CALLING FOR SOLIDARITY IN THE EFFORT TO FIND A &DEMOCRATIC EXITS TO THE &NIGHTMARES OF CHAVISMO. HE CALLED FOR STRONG SUPPORT FOR THE OCTOBER 10 MARCH. HE SHARPLY DISTINGUISHED THE CTV,S WORLDVIEW FROM THAT OF THE CHAVEZ ADMINISTRATION, CALLING FOR A &FACILITATOR STATE, NOT AN INTERVENOR STATE,8 WHICH WOULD HELP VENEZUELAN WORKERS INSERT THEMSELVES INTO A GLOBALIZED ECONOMY.

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LOOKING FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES  
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9. (U) WHILE THE DENUNCIATION OF CHAVEZ FORMED THE CORE OF THE BARQUISIMETO CONVENTION, SOME EFFORT WAS MADE TO PRESENT POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE POLICIES. RECOGNIZING THE CLASS-BASED APPEAL OF CHAVEZ,S RHETORIC, FERNANDEZ AND OTHER SPEAKERS  
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TOOK PAINS TO MENTION THE NEED FOR POLICIES TO REDUCE POVERTY. HE SPOKE IN GENERAL TERMS OF AGREEMENTS BETWEEN FIRMS AND WORKERS TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY AND FOR A &MORE DEMOCRATIC AND COMMUNICATIVES STYLE ON THE PART OF EMPLOYERS. HE CALLED, IN GENERAL TERMS, FOR NEW APPROACHES TO HEALTH, SOCIAL SECURITY, AND A REFORM OF THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. ECONOMIST MAXIM ROSS ALSO TACKLED THE THEME OF POVERTY IN A PRESENTATION IN WHICH HE CITED WORLD BANK CALCULATIONS THAT TWO-THIRDS OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION COMES FROM ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND THE REMAINDER FROM PROPERLY TARGETED GOVERNMENT POLICIES.

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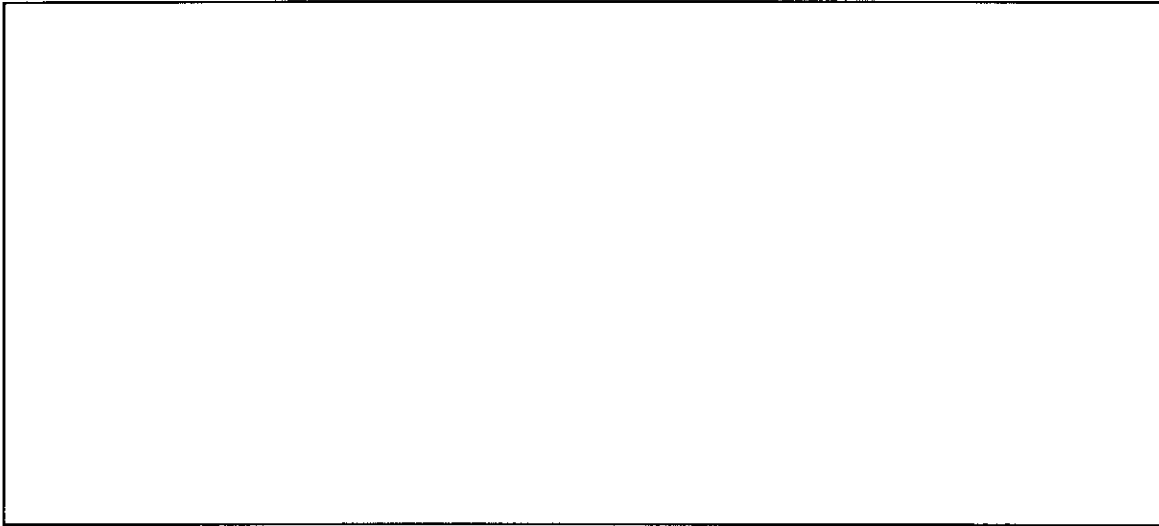
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